CBS MEMORANDUM

FROM: Jack Samson (CCP)
TO: IRV DRASNIN (CND)
DATE: September 30, 1975

You did not answer my questions (in spite of the smoke-screen seven-page memo pointing out references to hunting in a number of outdoor magazines). Of course we deal with hunting methods. We are a magazine (80 years old reaching 8 million people per month) devoted to the subject--along with fishing, boating, camping, recreational vehicles, dogs, etc. I asked you specific reportorial questions and I got back generalities and evasive answers. I am an experienced reporter--UP, Associated Press and Nieman Fellow so please don't talk down to me.

I wanted to know the rationale of allowing Cleveland Amory, president of the Fund for Animals (a very definite pressure group) to preview Guns of Autumn when dozens of individuals from gun companies, shooting organizations and conservation groups were refused.

I asked you if the AP story of WCBS-TV crew helping to raise money for Fund for Animals was true. That's all I asked. I could just as easily have asked you if Cleveland Amory was not offered several thousand dollars as a consultant. I don't care if he was never paid and I don't care who else was approached. That would be a reportorial question and not, as you say "conspiracy mentality."

You are guilty of the worst type of journalism. You started with a preconceived idea (that hunting is bad; that it is done by slobs; that it is because of blood lust; that it is not justifiable either for food, sport or as a wildlife management tool; that it is anachronistic; that intelligent, educated or "decent" people don't do it; that it is done only on preserves; that modern technology does not give the game a chance) and then you set about proving that thesis by the use of selected interviews and slick editing of tape.

Nowhere in that 90 minutes did you intimate that the chairman of the board of Rockwell International hunts and fishes, that

the president of Abercrombie & Fitch is a grouse shooter. Nowhere in your "news" documentary did you show well-dressed, educated, vocal affluent Americans hunting. By the slick use of Hillbilly music, sound track yaks and guffaws, heavy breathing, the constant firing of guns, and shots of "redneck" hunters in the field and in bars, you gave the impression that all hunting was like this. Nowhere did you show the beauty, the sport, the companionship, the appreciation of nature, the real search for game or the real skills necessary to the sport.

What has angered me and the millions of other legitimate American hunters (and me as a professional journalist) is that you were so blatantly unfair and biased about the entire project and that you still try to defend it by deceit and camouflage. Why was it necessary to tell those approached that you were going to make a "Bicentennial Film on hunting" in order to get them to cooperate? (And there are dozens of ranchers, preserve owners, and sportsmen waiting to sign affidavits that you and your crew did just that.)

I just returned from a trip to the Grand Teton Mountains of Wyoming where our party packed in (10 hours by horseback), hunted hard for four days--nine hours a day on horseback and foot at altitudes averaging 9,000 feet--set up our own camp, took photographs, fished, and rode all one day getting out. We saw two cow elk and not one of us got a shot at a bull. I was with three doctors, the owner of an electronics firm, and another editor. Not one of those men, upon completion of that great trip into that marvelous scenery, expressed any regret at not getting his elk. I doubt if you have the slightest idea what I am talking about.

Using your technique and journalistic sense of responsibility, I could make half of America hate mothers. All I would have to do is spend 90 minutes talking to alchoholic mothers; show scenes of child abuse, child neglect and child abandonment; photograph starving children, beaten children, and lonely, frightened youngsters in filthy orphanages. That would be propaganda, Sir, but it would not be news documentary. And that is what you are guilty of with "The Guns of Autumn."

cc: Messrs. O'Neill, Backe, Leonard